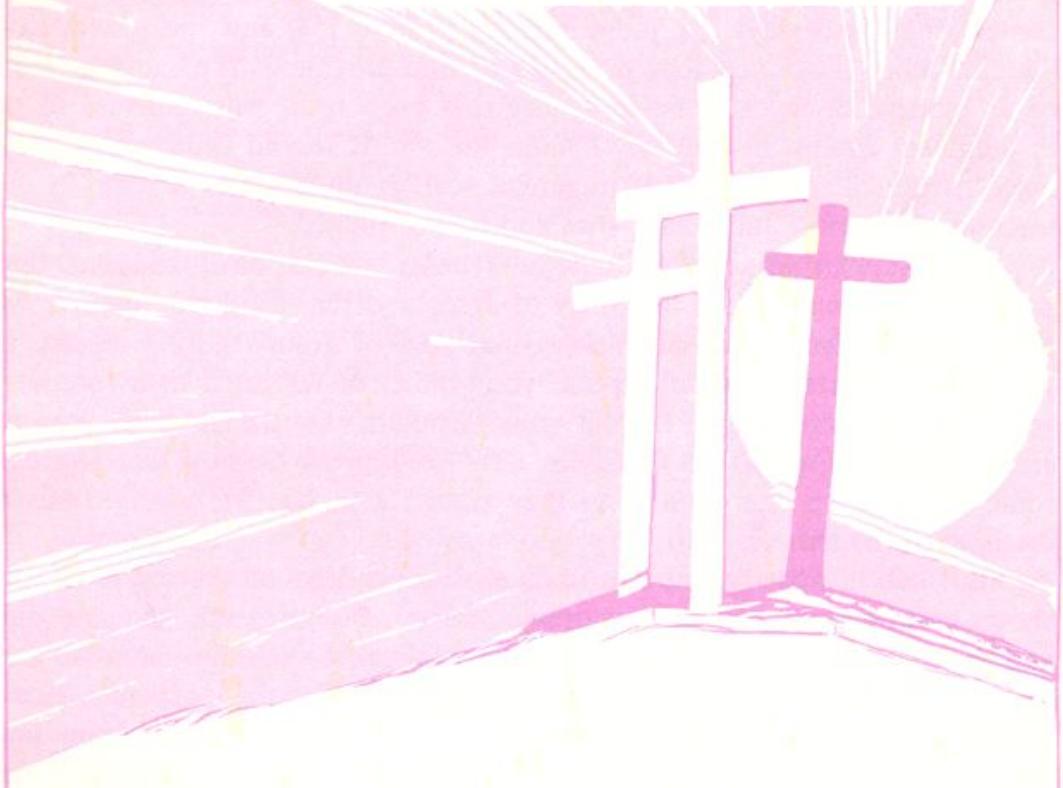
RESTORATION REVIEW



Our great honor lies in being just what Jesus was and is. To be accepted by those who accept Him, rejected by all who reject Him, loved by those who love Him and hated by everyone that hates Him. What greater glory could come to any man?

— A. W. Tozer

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THE CLEMENCY OF JESUS

In the early church, especially in Syria, a touching story circulated about Jesus and a woman. Some of the scholars whose task it was to copy the four gospel records thought it should be included in those records. But where? It was placed where it is now found, in John 8, for it is in that context that Jesus says, "I judge no one" (verse 15), and the scribes saw that the story illustrated that principle of non-judgment. It should give all of us modern disciples pause to realize that even Jesus was reluctant to sit in judgment against his fellows. *I judge no one.* It should cause us to think twice before climbing into the judgment seat. It underscores a basic in the teaching of Jesus, "Judge not, that you be not judged."

So one can understand why a scholar would have selected that particular context to place this story of Jesus and the sinful woman, but we are to realize that it was not an original part of John's gospel record. If you find it reduced to small type in your Bible, or relegated to a footnote, you will understand why. In fact some scholars saw the story as part of Jesus' last days when the Pharisees were seeking to destroy him through some trumped up charge, and so they placed it in Lk. 21, where Jesus is teaching in the temple.

But this in no way imposes upon the authenticity of the story. It only shows us how there were many, many stories of what Jesus said and did, and that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John had to be selective in what they included. It is possible that they did not know about this particular story, though it continued to live in the oral tradition of the church. John says something of the problem they had in selecting from the immense resources available to them. "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (Jn. 21:25).

We can be thankful that this blessed little story was preserved, first by word of mouth and finally made a part of Scripture. We can believe that the Holy Spirit saw to it that this episode on the grace of God was not lost to the church. It not only teaches us of the depths of God's grace but also of the clemency of Jesus. Clemency means forbearance or leniency or mercy toward an offender or an enemy. Jesus was lenient rather than rigid, forbearing rather than judgmental, clement rather than condemnatory. It has given rise to beautiful names, for boy and girl alike, Clement and Clementine. It was, however, Pope Clement who was not all that clement in that it was he who excommunicated Henry VIII, which set the stage for the rise of the Church of England.

The Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus, not because of any benevolent feelings towards her, but "that they might have some charge to bring against him." They were hopeful of ensnaring him on the horns of a dilemma, for if he set the woman free he would be ignoring the demands of the law of Moses as set forth in Lev. 20:10. If he ruled that she should be stoned, he would be usurping the Roman law, which did not allow the Jews to exercise the death penalty. It forms a perfect dilemma, a syllogism, which I have dealt with many times in logic class. It goes this way:

If he frees the woman, he will violate Moses' law and thus come under judgment of the Jewish court.

If he condemns the woman to die, he will violate the Roman law and thus come under judgment of the Roman court.

He must either free the woman or condemn the woman.

Therefore, he must come under judgment, either of the Jewish court or the Roman court.

Dilemmas are tricky and ensnaring and there is hardly a way of escape. We learn in logic class that, if possible, one might "slip through the horns" of the dilemma. In this dilemma the horns are *He must either free the woman or condemn the woman.* Jesus slipped through the horns, *gloriously,* by neither freeing the woman or condemning her. He saw another alternative. He turned their logic against themselves by forcing them to face the reality of their own sins: *Let him who* is *without sin throw the first stone.* They were now impaled on the horns of their own dilemma. If one of them dared to throw a stone, he would thus claim to be without sin and thus condemned of God; if he did not throw a stone, he had to withdraw his charge against the woman and thus be self-condemned. Rather than to linger with the dilemma that now impaled them, they disappeared from the scene, one by one, beginning with the eldest and wisest.

A unique feature of this story is that it is the only known instance of Jesus ever writing anything. Having caught the woman in the act of adultery, they brought her to Jesus, telling him that Moses commanded that such a one be stoned, and asking, "What do you say about her?" What Moses really said was that "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death." One wonders why the *man,* and not only the woman, was not arrested and brought to judgment.

There has been interesting speculation on what Jesus wrote in the sand. Some think it was mere doodling, while he was considering the situation. The best guess is that since the Pharisees were putting him in the place of a Roman judge, he played the part, writing down the sentence, as was the case in Roman courts, before it was read publicly. The way

he read the sentence may have implied the woman's guilt, but they found it difficult to execute the sentence: *Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.* Moses had ruled that the first stones should be thrown by those who witnessed the misdeed.

According to the story, Jesus bent to the ground and wrote not once but twice. Some think that the second time he wrote he marked out a sentence against them, exposing their sins by naming them in the sand. In any event, it was at this point that the Pharisees departed.

It may have been with a touch of humor that Jesus conducted court from that point on, and we can imagine that he got some satisfaction out of the way the hypocrites hightailed it. Jesus and the woman were now alone. "Where are they?," he asked, knowing full well where they were. "Has no one condemned you?," he said, as if to suggest that there is no way for a court to condemn the accused if there are no accusers. "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more," he told her. While intolerant of the sin, he was forbearing toward the sinner.

One can imagine the impact this must have had upon the woman. If she was asked about this experience with the controversial young rabbi, she no doubt would have described him as a most unusual man. It might well have been the only time ever that she was in the presence of a young man *alone* who wanted her without wanting her body.

The clemency and magnanimity of Jesus are a great lesson for the church today. We are often cast in the role of judge of those who are guilty of such sins. It is rather easy to be self-righteous and judgmental. Jesus shows us how we can disapprove of the sin and yet be magnanimous in our treatment of the sinner.

The clemency of Jesus should cause us to be more lenient in the way we treat the divorced. There is presently a controversy raging in Churches of Christ over the way the divorced are being treated, with some coming down hard, as if there is no hope for the divorced, while others are calling for moderation.

One does not have to alter the story very much to see how it would apply to those preachers and elders who refuse to admit the divorced into the kingdom of God, unless, that is, they satisfy the accusers in their impossible demands (such as separating from their present mate, thus breaking up still another home). "Lord, this woman has been married before, and so has this man, and now they are married to each other and yet they seek membership in the church. We say they must repent, which means to quit 'living in adultery.' What do you say?"

It would be in character for Jesus to hand them a stone, and say, "Let the one who was all that righteous when *he* came into the church cast the first stone."

The heart of the Christian faith is that *Jesus receives sinful humanity,* all of sinful humanity that will come to him. This includes the divorced as well as the dispossessed and the discouraged. It is dangerous business for the church to stand in the way. We can always find some law, some Scripture that will condemn, just as the Pharisees could. We are slow to learn that we are more like Christ when we are compassionate and lenient than when we are exacting and demanding.

Someone has observed that Jesus was easy to please but hard to satisfy. That is what comes across in this story. Jesus was pleased to accept the woman as she was, without condemning her. But he was not satisfied with her life. *Go and sin no more*, he urged. And we never completely satisfy the demand of heaven, weak as we are, but still God in his grace is pleased to accept us as his children.

The church must be like that. Always pleased to be a haven for all sinners, but never satisfied with the spiritual progress of its children.—*the Editor*

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ROUND ROBIN PREACHING

An insertion in our readers' exchange column is a letter from Harold Thomas, minister to the College Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas, telling of "a Round-Robin pulpit exchange involving six churches in Conway." The letter reveals that the Church of Christ joined with the Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Disciples in this exchange of pulpits. Harold reports that he found the experience most wholesome.

That word round robin caught my eye, for I do not recall hearing it used in reference to church life. The derivation of the term is most interesting, the *robin* being taken from a personal name, and the *round* having to do with the circular character of the activity. Having spent some of my time as a boy on golf courses, one of my older brothers being a professional golfer, I first heard the term round robin in reference to golf tournaments. Unlike other tournaments, in a round robin a contestant is never eliminated just because he loses, and everybody plays everybody else.

So I take it that in a truly round robin preaching match that a preacher would "make the rounds," preaching at every other church in the circle, and all the other preachers would visit his church. It may not have been exactly that way at Conway, but it was something like that. Round robin preaching! I am impressed.

The term round robin seems to have antedated sports and referred first of all to an official document where the signatures appeared in a circle, so that no one could tell who signed first. The Declaration of Independence is something like that, for there appears to be no order to the signatures. There are also round robin letters that circulate in a circle, with various ones joining in the letter, each adding a few lines.

We can be encouraged by what happened at Conway, for it shows that our people are not bound by fate to be forever exclusivistic, having nothing to do with other Christians. When this kind of association becomes more common, it will mean that Church of Christ folk will hear a Methodist minister on one occasion, then an Episcopalian, then a Baptist, a Presbyterian, etc., while their minister will be visiting with these same churches, all sharing together out of the great repository of Scripture. Our traditions and emphases being different, there is so much that we have to learn from each other.

It is odd that this kind of fellowship came to be suspect among Churches of Christ, for it is completely consistent to the practice of our forebears from the outset of our history. The earliest Churches of Christ in this country, under the leadership of Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell, were not only open to visiting ministers of various denominations, but some of the churches belonged to an association of churches. The Brush Run church, for example, which was the very first Campbell church, belonged to a Baptist association. It never occurred to them that this implied an endorsement of all that the member churches believed and practiced.

That is indeed a strange logic that nurtures our exclusivism, that if we enjoy fellowship with the Methodists on anything at all, such as exchanging pulpits, it means we approve of all the things that can be conjured up about Methodism. That being the case how can we justify reading Adam Clarke’s commentaries, written by and published by the Methodists? If you read Clarke that means you endorse everything he stands for! That is silly enough, true. It is equally foolish to say that if we permit ourselves to enjoy (hear me, really *enjoy*) people in other churches, that we are somehow partakers in any errors they may have. On that basis no Church of Christ can even have fellowship with itself, for no church anywhere agrees on everything. And our preachers could not even fellowship their own elders, not even their own wives. This myth that fellowship must be predicated upon complete agreement on all points of doctrine has been our undoing. It has kept us from treating other Christians as equals, assuming a superiority for ourselves. It is no way to live, not in our kind of world where believers, *all* believers, badly need each other.

Well, I am not saying I told you so, but many of you out there who have about given up hope for the Church of Christ thought that what happened at Conway could not happen to a Church of Christ. And they are not the first. It is happening more and more, and one

day, when the Lord has opened our eyes to how we have treated other Christians, it will be an accepted practice. We will have joined the Christian world, and never once will we have to compromise any truth we hold. Did Harold Thomas and the Conway church surrender any truth by reaching out like they did? Rather they gained truth by learning to share with other believers. It is always right to treat a brother *as a brother* and a sister *as a sister.* It is in treating other of God's children as enemies that we make our most serious compromise of truth.

When I write this I think of a Disciples of Christ minister who confided in me that he had always wanted to preach in a Church of Christ. It was a fellowship he longed for. It struck me as sad and tragic that he was unable to fulfill such a modest desire. But it is more than sad and tragic. It is grossly sinful. That of course has been a large part of our problem: we have not come to realize, as did our pioneers, the sinfulness of division.

As the seriousness of this sin is brought home to us, we will move more vigorously in being the true Body of Christ and will be intolerant of division and all the lame excuses that we have used to perpetuate it.—*the Editor*

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WHAT TURNS A SKEPTIC TO CHRIST?

Many of us have followed with interest the pilgrimage of Malcolm Muggeridge, the British journalist and social critic, who turned from skepticism to Christianity, even from a critic of the faith to one of its staunchest defenders. As an apologist for the Bible, he sees the contradictions therein as an indication of its integrity. The contradictions could easily have been edited out, he insists, claiming that he could do it himself, and the fact that they were not means that they are for real. "If the Gospels are a fake," he writes in his *Jesus: The Man Who Lives*, "then the hands that did the faking were quite exceptionally inexpert and careless."

Those who knew the crusty old pessimist back when he was editor of *Punch* were amazed that he became a Christian, so they asked him why. The answer is given in a new book about him, *Malcolm Muggerridge: A Life*, by Ian Hunter. The answer may in essence be the only answer that can be given. It was the answer that Peter gave when Jesus asked if the apostles themselves would turn back and walk with him no more. *To whom shall we go?* asked the fisherman. It was his answer, not a question. And I am persuaded it is the only answer fallen man has.

Muggeridge tells how he saw himself as a stranger in this world. He had his idols to be sure, all centered in material things, but they toppled before him one by one. He found no hope in the political systems, for even though he rejected the despotism he found in Communism when he served as a correspondent in Moscow, he found no security in the institutions of the West. The more he learned about his world the more pessimistic he became. It was therefore the pessimism that he saw in Christianity that began to turn his life around. He was especially impressed with Jesus' promise: "In the world you will have troubles, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."

Muggeridge says quite pointedly that he accepted Christ because he had no other alternative. He has been very critical of TV, insisting that it fabricates an unreal world, merchandising in tinsel and confetti. Still TV mirrors the world as it is, deceived and deceiving. All that the world pursues, Muggeridge came to see, whether power, sensual pleasure, money, learning, celebrity, or even happiness are preposterously unrewarding. He sees in this God's mercy, for as man comes to see how superficial all these things are - and God in His mercy has made them unrewarding - he has but one thing to turn to and that is Jesus Christ.

In another manner of speaking it was disgust with what he saw as rector at Edinburgh University that fanned his enthusiasm for the Christian faith. The students protested for the right to use LSD, present nude scenes on stage, and ready access to birth control pills. When they turned on him for not taking their side, he challenged them to turn their creative powers toward great art and ideas rather than to a slobbering debauchery that called only for dope and bed. He resigned in protest. The deity of Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead thus became the anchor of Muggeridge's life.

Is this not actually the predicament of all mankind, and is Muggeridge's answer not the answer for us all? It is all a problem of colossal greed. The world by its very nature is carnal and greedy, whether for power, pleasure, or prestige. It is apparent even in the church, for we are often greedy for our own way, greedy for our preferences, greedy for attention and recognition. But it is all so vain, and in the end, as Muggeridge discovered, preposterously unrewarding. Suppose we do win the argument, gain the point, have our way, put up our man, or put somebody down? Or even gain riches and fame? So what? Such a life can be terribly empty. It is no way to live. The simple life, directed by the golden rule, is the victorious life.

Muggeridge now professes Jesus Christ as Lord, but he has joined no church. With its "crazed clergy, empty churches, and total doctrinal confusion", the church is like the society around it, *dead.* The Christianity that one sees in the church is drained of its transcendental meaning, he says. He is content to serve as a prophet to the church, calling

it to repentance from without. So Christendom, the power structure of the church, is over, he says in his *The End of Christendom.* But Christ is not over.

He takes hope in Christianity's power to renew itself, and he sees this the world over. He is especially encouraged by the surge of the Christian faith in Russia. His bottom line is therefore, "Finding in everything only deception and nothingness, the soul is constrained to have recourse to God himself and to rest content with him."

In Muggeridge we have an example of the churchless type of Christian renewal, which may ultimately prove to be the church itself, rising out of our decadence and calling us to be the real Body of Christ. Muggeridge at least shows us that men can and will find their way to Christ, with or without the church, and that *Christ is the only answer.* It may be that the church itself, believing too much in its own doctrines and structures, has yet to learn that lesson.—*the Editor*

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FELLOWSHIPING WILLIAM BARCLAY

I am not sure that *fellowship* has a participial form. Webster does not seem to think so, and the use of the term *koinonia* in the Scriptures, from which the term is translated, would not suggest it. If fellowship is a state or relationship, as is partnership or companionship, it would not have a participial form, for one would hardly speak of *partnershiping* or *companionshiping* someone. That fellowship is a substantive that describes a relationship between people is itself significant. We can certainly enter into fellowship, strengthen fellowship, and enjoy fellowship, but to speak of *fellowshiping* someone, or, more often than not, *disfellowshiping* someone, is to suggest that *we* control the relationship and that it is up to *us* as to whether we fellowship (verb) something or someone, instead of the heavenly Father creating the relationship.

And *things* become part of the problem, such as "We do not fellowship instrumental music" or Sunday Schools or whatever. In the same way we speak of "We don't fellowship the other congregation in town." We really mean something like *They are not OK* or *We do not approve of them.* There are people within the fellowship of God that have beliefs and practices of which I do not approve, but that does not impose upon the fact that they are in the fellowship (or in *communion* with the Father and all the saints, if you choose to use a different word). Paul and Barnabas once had to separate over a disagreement, but they were in the fellowship of the Spirit as much as ever, and so it would be misleading to speak of Paul not fellowshiping Barnabas over the question of taking Mark.

Well, this is not intended to be an essay on fellowship. But I was reminded of the problem when I turned to Webster to see how I should spell the participial form, only to find that he does not regard it as having verbal form. I think he is right. So in this piece I use the term as I often hear it among the churches, and so I want to ask if we can fellowship (verb) William Barclay. Perhaps you realize that he is rapidly becoming "the most read man" among Churches of Christ, even more than the renowned Adam Clarke.

Recently I was visiting with the Brainerd Church of Christ in Chattanooga. In the pew in front of me sat this cheerful sister, who sang and listened with enthusiasm. While she sat alone, she had two books at her side, her Bible and a volume from the *Daily Bible Study* by William Barclay. When I met her after the service, I told her some stories about Barclay that I had learned from two visits with him in Glasgow, Scotland. She was unequivocal in her appreciation of the late theologian and was delighted with what she was learning from his writings.

It reminds me of a question that I asked Barclay on one of my visits, as to why he was widely read in conservative circles, including my own Church of Christ, when he was a liberal. He amended the label by describing himself as "an evangelical liberal," and he accounted for his conservative readership on the ground that he simply sought to interpret the text and not divert from it.

I found him to be eminently Christian, a delightful man who troubled himself to come to my hotel late at night for a visit with an American brother. We spoke of his hearing aid ("My deafness is a blessing, for I can remove my hearing aid when I study and be in a completely quiet world"), his resourcefulness ("I am blessed with a photographic mind; I remember everything I read, what book it is in, and even the page"), and the unity talks between his own Church of Scotland and the Church of England ("We can talk out the problem of baptism, but we are at an impasse on the ministry question,") a reference to the Anglican position on episcopal succession, which does not recognize the Scottish clergy as duly ordained ministers.

Some of these things passed through my mind as I saw this dear Church of Christ sister with William Barclay sitting beside her, sort of. But as I sat there I was smitten by the cruel and debilitating Church of Christ doctrine on fellowship, which says that a sister may read and enjoy William Barclay in her Bible study, but that he is not really a Christian and cannot be fellowshipped. He could not even be called on to lead a prayer to the Father of us all or to address the congregation—even if he said no more than what he has already written, which it is all right for us to read! We can read him but not hear him, not in a Church of Christ. Being the exclusivists that we are, we can hear only our own people,

except maybe Dr. Dobson *on film.* We are our own worst enemy. We greatly deprive ourselves by shutting ourselves off from the rest of the Christian world.

If he were still living, the crusty old Scot would have a great time visiting with the Brainerd Church of Christ. If asked to speak, he would no doubt get right into the Scriptures, more so I dare say than our own preachers do. He would be delightfully fraternal and would go out of his way not to offend Church of Christ sensitivities. And it would be to the utter delight of the sister who has been reading him all these years, along with many others. And in a social gathering with the doughty theologian it would be a day the church would long remember.

But the likes of Barclay are not OK. They are off limits. In fact they are not even Christians. I did not say this to our sister who is a Barclay fan, but I thought it: *Does it embarrass you to belong to a church that insists that William Barclay was not even a Christian?*

Well, it embarrasses me, and I am resolved to help our people overcome such suffocating narrowness. I am persuaded that a majority of our people have a more open view. It is the leadership that must get with it and bring our people within the framework of the Christian world. I appreciate the passion for being true to the Scriptures that has led our people into parochialism, but we must realize that we have fallen victim to the same legalism that destroyed the Pharisees.

It is probably true that people in other churches, like Prof. Barclay, have not obeyed God *perfectly,* and that they have errors in both belief and practice. But pray tell me, dear brother and sister, if one's obedience to God must be absolutely perfect before he can be a Christian, then how about those of us in Churches of Christ? Are we willing to judge ourselves on the same basis that we judge others? It is like our own Alexander Campbell said (when advocating the acceptance of believers like William Barclay) that if one's faith and practice has to be perfect before he can be a Christian, then there is not a Christian in the world and there never has been.

We must be more like Jesus, who was slow to reject anyone who was trying to serve God. "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us," they said to him (Mk. 9:38). His response was that they should not forbid him, for "he that is not against us is for us." Even though the man belonged to "another church," Jesus came very close to "fellowshiping" him!—*the Editor*

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SLOGAN MENTALITY

Robert Meyers

If being fatuous seems as deeply irreligious to you as it does to me, perhaps the following question can be forgiven for taking up space usually reserved for gentle exhortation.

Have you ever found yourself disproportionately annoyed by those simplistic little maxims printed on church signs and bulletin boards? Like: "Lean on Jesus. . . Before He Leans on You" — a kind of coy, cute threat which somehow offends me to the central marrow of my smallest toe.

Or like: "God is 'DOG' Spelled Backwards . . . And He Really *Is* Man's Best Friend," a princely piece of theology which I would give a great deal to be able to forget, but which sticks in my memory like an unwelcome burr.

And how about those bromides which are so faithfully posted once a week on the signboards of certain businesses? We have a realtor in our end of town, admirable in just about every way I can think of, who uses his signboard to post little homilies which I try (unsuccessfully) to resist reading as I drive to work each morning.

Things like: "Talk With Your Friends, But Not About Them," and "Work Will Win, But Wishing Won't." Both true enough, perhaps only too true, but at the same time not the whole truth. Too easy to be the whole truth. Too glib, too unctuous.

I always find myself wanting to counter them. It may be true, I mutter to myself as I drive on, that "work will win, but wishing won't," but it is also true that if one gets settled down to working too soon, without doing some wishing first, he may spend the rest of his life in a rut he absolutely hates.

If you have read this far, I can safely insert a splendid comment on slogans by George Eliot, that brilliant 19th century English woman who writes so much better and more demandingly than I can or would dare:

"All people of broad, strong sense have instinctive repugnance to the men of maxims; because such people early discover that the mysterious complexity of our life is not to be embraced by maxims, and that to lace ourselves up in formulas of that sort is to repress all the divine promptings and inspirations that spring from growing insight and sympathy.

"The man of maxims is the popular representative of the minds that are guided in their moral judgments solely by general rules, thinking that these will lead them to justice by ready-made patent method, without the trouble of exerting patience, discrimination, impartiality; without any care to assure themselves whether they have the insight that

comes from a hardly-earned estimate of temptation or from a life vivid and intense enough to have created a wide fellow-feeling with all that is human."

When something annoys us like this maxim business, but doesn't seem to bother the more normal citizenry, we always wonder if perhaps we may not have a secret screw loose someplace. So it pleases me that James Thurber also scowled at these faintly pompous little adages, knowing perfectly well that most of them can be reversed without losing an ounce of truth. So he did it by way of illustration: "He Who Hesitates Is Sometimes Saved."

Thank you, Thurber, for a stout left jab at slogan mentality, than which few things are less useful for understanding the mysteries of a religion with a cross at the heart of it.

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MYTHS ABOUT THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT (3)

W. *Carl Ketcherside*

Those who claim to be heirs of "the restoration movement" launched by those stalwart and worthy Presbyterians, the Campbells and others, believe they have restored the church which Jesus built. For this reason that movement is now universally referred to as "The Church of Christ." This implies that only those who are allied with it are in the kingdom of heaven and have any hope of being saved eventually. Some narrow it down still more. They recognize as "children of the light" only those who are members of the specific party or faction with which they are allied. Those who have defected from them for conscience' sake and have flaked off are regarded as heretics. It is thought they are rejected of the Father because they are no longer received by the party.

It is a common resort to select five or six things prominent in the original body as established by Jesus, and attempt to prove the movement is identical with it by showing that these things are basic to both. Obviously, such matters as the community of goods, foot-washing, and the holy kiss are explained away or dealt with facetiously by those who make the argument. This is also a common method employed by the Catholic Church which "believes that Christ founded the Catholic Church to guarantee and preach his divine revelation; that he promised it his divine assistance even to the consummation of the world." This is a statement by Joseph H. Cavanaugh, of Notre Dame University, in his book "Evidence For Our Faith."

In his chapter entitled “Marks of the Church,” he affirms that “The marks of the church are external, objective signs by which the Catholic Church can certainly be known as the authentic Church of Christ.” His marks are unity, catholicity, holiness and apostolicity.” Now almost every preacher in “The Church of Christ” has a sermon entitled “The Marks of the Church.” For years I preached on that, or a kindred theme, every time I engaged in an evangelistic meeting. I labored diligently to show that the five things I had selected as marks were true of the “Church of Christ” and of no other group of people on earth. That was a little presumptuous and probably not quite true. But like the Catholics I thought this proved something that it did not.

Both the Catholics and ourselves are trying to prove that we are “the authentic Church of Christ.” Each of us has selected wholly different marks by which to establish it. It was not until after I had studied the course in Applied Psychology, that I could detect the fallacies in our propagandizing. I threw away my sermon outlines. Eventually I placed them all in the garbage can. It is evident that it is not by doing certain things right that we prove we are the body of Christ. Everyone of these can be and have been faked in the past. Only one thing can prove we are his. That is our relationship to Him through the Spirit. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

Then which church is the right one? The right one is the only one. It is the one into which we are inducted and are being sustained by the Spirit. “For by one Spirit were you all baptized into one body and were all made to drink of that one Spirit.” The Spirit never baptized anyone into a sect regardless of its name. There is only one church. There never was but one. There will never be another. It is a divine organism, not a human organization. It is a creation of God, not a concoction by man. One might as well try to institute another Holy Spirit as to form another body. “There is one Spirit and one body.” When God looks at His church He does not see the Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist churches. He does not see the Nazarene, the Church of God, the Church of Christ, or the Christian Church. Not at all. He sees the one body consisting of every saved person on earth, every called out person who has responded to the call.

All of these names are humanly given. Some are found in the sacred scriptures, some are not. But all of them have been selected by men to apply to something smaller than God created. So long as they exist his is a futile search who seeks the right one. Some are more nearly correct in certain aspects than others. Often merely lip service is given to those points. “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” As long as God’s people are divided none of their parties is the right one. The saddest mistake we were betrayed into by Satan was the calling of these various parties, fragments and sections of the Christian citizenship, churches.

They are not churches and cannot be. We have multiplied confusion by designating sects as churches. Who knows what good would accrue if everyone became absolutely honest, acknowledging there was but one church, and that all we had done was to create sects. In reality, there can never come about the unity for which our Lord prayed until something like this happens. It can never be achieved by any group which expects to attain it by telling everyone, “Come and join us and we will all be one.” Such unity is the snake and frog approach, in which the snake makes the proposal that the frog contribute to unity by permitting himself to be swallowed by the snake.

Human tendency being what it is, men would join the largest and most popular and successful of the sects. Thus all in the United States would become Baptists. Universally all would become Orthodox or Roman Catholic. But it is not a matter of joining any sect, large or small. What God wants to see is the abolition of all the sects, starting with the Catholic Church as the mother of all and extending to the smallest and most exclusive. All are as repugnant to God as any other work of the flesh. The glory we give to the sect is glory subtracted from the one body.

If we could one time sense the feeling of God as He looks at the sects which shiver the body to bits we would immediately divest ourselves of them and become Christians, and Christians only. We would cease to be Church of God Christians, or Church of Christ Christians, or Friends Christians or Baptist Christians. It is pride in what we have created which makes us feel that we cannot do without it, that we would be spiritually naked if it were taken from us. It is pride which causes one to say, “I was born a Baptist and I intend to die a Baptist!” Or a Methodist! Or a Presbyterian! Or a Catholic!

What operates to cause men to cling so tightly to something other men have started? I think the answer is found in their insecurity. We are cast into a world geared to promote fear and unrest. After we have defended, fought for and leaned upon a System, we feel that we must cling to it, stand by it, or be lost. It is an indication of a lack of faith in the eternal values which a loving Father has provided for us. We want to walk by sight and not by faith. We trust the inventions of men over the provisions of God because like Moses at the mount, “we exceedingly quake and tremble.”

It is obvious that we regard as heroes of the faith those who leave their parties and sects to come to us, but we blast as heretics those who leave us because they can no longer tolerate our creedalism, rigidity, and legalism. Those who come to us are getting their eyes open, those who give up on us are “closing their eyes against the light.” I personally feel that each of us must be accountable to God for what He does. If he feels that some position we take is unscriptural or unscrupulous we should not attempt to hold him to it in violation of his conscience. We cannot judge one’s allegiance to Christ by his attachment to any

sect. The attempt to hold one by threat or coercion is contrary to the spirit of righteousness. We have not been appointed as God's secret agents to police other men's hearts. We are not divine CIA agents to run everyone into the ground who holds a slightly different opinion than ourselves.—*139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

It is heartening that leaders in the local churches of the mainline denominations are calling upon their officials to get with it and do the church's mission in this world, which is to evangelize. An illustration of this is in *The Disciple,* the official publication of Disciples of Christ. A pastor in Lubbock, distressed over "more fog than focus" in what his denomination's leadership is saying and doing about evangelism, wrote: "How stupid it is to think the church will grow by simply passing resolutions! We are sick indeed (and perhaps terminally ill) if our denomination thinks that the Great Commission is carried out in assemblies and resolutions." We would all do well to follow this example of self-criticism and not gloat over the failures of others.

It is a matter of history that many of Alexander Campbell's descendents left his Movement and became Episcopalians. One of our readers tells how this is now happening with a number of our Church of Christ people. He gives names and places, and it is especially interesting that they come from the "right wing" of the Church of Christ, some being graduates of Florida College. The reason for this, he thinks, is that they instinctively know what they have missed and find it with the Episcopalians. He also notes that many "Jesus people" have turned to the Episcopal Church, the reason being that the kids learned what it means to worship, he says.

We have a news release from Lubbock Christian College (5601 W. 19th St., Lubbock Tx. 79407) announcing 100 scholarships to young people "from all segments of the Restoration Movement," and the notice is being sent to the journals representing the various groups. This is an impressive gesture. Write the college if you are interested.

The students, staff, and faculty of Harvard Divinity School have issued "A Time to Speak" manifesto that calls for "an immediate world-wide freeze on the production of nuclear weapons, a staged reduction of present nuclear arsenals, and the eventual abolition of nuclear arms." They ask all communities of faith to join them, urging "In the name of God, let us speak out now, lest our silence once again make us accomplices to holocaust,

this one threatening the very existence of humankind." The manifesto insists that the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances is contrary to the will of God.

Ouida and I recently visited with the Random Road Chapel in Arkansas City, Ks., a tiny church with a gargantuan impulse to be a blessing. A quarter of a century ago it started as a "walk out" from a Church of Christ. It has recently installed both a piano and organ, all agreeing to do this. This is very unusual for a group with a Church of Christ background, and it is not likely to happen except with folk who feel they have broken all ties with their denominational past, which is the case with these unusually fine people. We have been with them many times when they were still non-instrument. In inviting us this time they were thoughtful enough to ask us if the instruments would make any difference. They didn't. While we are members of a non-instrumental Church of Christ, we consider this question a matter for each congregation to decide for itself, with no lines of fellowship drawn. But Ouida and I agreed that our world *is* changing. We can take it!

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BOOK NOTES

A new book that deals with a long-neglected problem is now available. *Too Close Too Soon,* especially for the young, tells how to distinguish between attraction and love and how to avoid the disillusionment of premature intimacy. The authors have tested ways to avoid some of the pitfalls of dating. It would not be a bad graduation present at 5.50 post-paid.

Perhaps it would take a missionary like Lester Sumrall to write a spiritually-packed study on *The Names of God,* which will help you to practice the presence of God. Throughout the Old Testament God revealed himself through various names, such as Jehovah-Jireh. When the author deals with this name, he thrills your soul with the story of Abraham's faith. This book will be a spiritual feast. 5.50 postpaid.

I consider the retired professor of New Testament of Aberdeen U. in Scotland, A.M. Hunter, one of the exciting writers in that field. Anything he writes is worth reading, especially his *Preaching the New Testament,* which is rooted in the Good News. You will revel in his resourcefulness on old topics such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. 5.50 postpaid.

There is a new printing of a book that has for a generation been highly respected for its treatment of a highly controversialism. *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* by J. I. Packer will prove to be a challenge to all, whether they are Fundamentalists or liberals. 4.50 postpaid.

Westminster Press has issued a very attractive series called the Library of Living Faith with four different titles thus far. These are *The Joy of Worship, Becoming Human, Last Things First* (a study of the end of the world, judgment, second coming), and *New Life in the Spirit.* You may order anyone of them or all at 6.50 each postpaid.

For 8.95 we will send you a new book, *Stress Management for Ministers,* a book for preachers who deny themselves of what they seek to give to others.

We consider *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* the best of the Bible dictionaries. Highly illustrated, it is a goldmine of information, up-to-date and reliable. 18.95 postpaid.

Some of you may be fans of Paul Tournier, the renowned Christian psychiatrist. If so you will want *Reflections,* which he has written as a personal guide for life's most crucial questions, such as fear, prayer, love, self-discovery, sickness and suffering. 7.95 postpaid.

This column informed you earlier of the new Daily Study Bible on the Old Testament, patterned after Barclay's popular set on the New Testament. They are thus a balance between scholarly study and devotional reading. The two volumes of *Genesis* are now available, as well as *Daniel* and *Leviticus,* four volumes in all. The hard cover is 10.95, but the soft cover at 5.95 each is a super buy. If you buy all four we pay the postage. Otherwise 6.50 each postpaid.

If you have difficulty with the Biblical doctrine of Satan, then you should read *I Believe in Satan's Downfall* by Michael Green, who is one of the church's great writers. With this book you will better understand the whole problem of evil. 6.50 postpaid.

For lovers of Restoration history we are sorry to announce that *The Fool of God,* by the beloved Louis Cochran, is now out of print. We have seven copies in stock at 5.75 postpaid on a first come first served basis. Still available is *The Biography of John T. Johnson* at 7.00 pp, and *The Gist of Romans* and *The Way of Salvation,* both by K. C. Moser, at 5.50 each postpaid.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

For many years I was among those opposed to instruments. One of the arguments was that Eph. 5:19 specifies "psalming" to be done in the heart, thereby excluding the instrument. If we apply such reasoning consistently, then Col. 3:16 excludes the use of our voices, for there the singing is to be done "in the hearts." It also seems strange to me that if we are to sing the psalms, we cannot be prohibited from doing what the psalms enjoin, which includes praise to God on instruments.—*J. D. Flanagin, Brownwood, Tx.*

(Such letters as these suggest to me that Church of Christ folk are taking a closer look at their old arguments and are not exactly buying them. They are thinking more for themselves, and that is healthful, whatever conclusion is finally reached. I get the distinct impression that the Churches of Christ generally are becoming less dogmatic on the instrument question. I suspect in time that while our people will continue to be acappella, except perhaps in marriage chapels, the non-use of instrumental music will simply be "the way we do it" and will be a non-issue in terms of fellowship. —*Ed.*)

I think I see a widespread opening of hearts and minds to Christ and I trust God to take advantage of our mellowing convictions and softened hearts.—*Jeff Hicks, Johnson Bible College, Knoxville, Tn.*

It was suggested at our last meeting that we study your new "Movement book" this fall in our sessions, and I think it is a good idea. One minister, Brint Simmons at Blanchard, said he just couldn't lay the book down until it was finished.—*Darrell Bolin, Lock Haven, Pa.*

(Dear friends of mine here in Denton received the following letter from their married daughter, who, along with her husband, works in a children's home in California, sponsored by Churches of Christ. They thought it would encourage the readers of this journal who are struggling to rear Christian children.—*Ed.*)

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have just spent a good part of my afternoon cutting up fresh strawberries, which flooded my mind with memories of home. Isn't it amazing what little things can trigger such great memories of home? Snapping beans, fresh fruit, even washing lettuce makes me think of home. I wish I could really share how my mind was overwhelmed with the tastes, senses, smells, etc. that I associate with you two.

I just want to thank you both again for giving me such sweet memories to recall, instead of the ugly ones the kids in this home have. Every day I live with these kids, I realize more and more what a lucky minority we were! You've given me an inner earthly

security, and you pointed the way to Him who is the source of eternal security. Your child now “rises up and calls you blessed.” How I wish for the unhappy twisted souls I live with that they could have experienced what I did. I love you dearly. Linda.

(This letter brings to my mind a scene from my experience as a professor. Once when teaching a small class of older students, I asked each to say something about himself or herself. A married woman, now with children of her own, chose to tell us that she had been reared by her grandparents. Tears welled up in her eyes as she whispered aloud, *God bless their memory!* One blesses her parents, the other was blessing her grandparents. This will encourage even more of our readers. Blessings or not, we must all hang in and do our best, parents and grandparents alike.—*Ed*.)

As I see it, we really have no legitimate reason for our existence as a separate body, except as we work for the unity of the whole church. Christian unity is our business, and we cannot claim to have any other. The most urgent need in the world today is for the church to start being the church and to start exemplifying in its life the authentic Christian way. Only in this way can unbelievers ever really know what Christianity is. As long as the church speaks with contradictory voices from dozens of different sects, unbelievers cannot be expected to hear the authentic gospel. There is no more important work in the world today than the work of convincing the divided church that this condition of disunity is actually a denial of its true work.—*Name withheld*

I am not well versed in the history of the Restoration movement. But this I know: the movement bears little resemblance to the movement as it was in the days of the great pioneers, who would not be allowed to preach in many ‘brotherhood’ churches today because of views they held. For all practical purposes, the Restoration movement has been sabotaged and virtually destroyed by men who abandoned the real purpose and genius of the movement to make of it an extremely exclusivist sect. Ignorance was a factor, I am sure, but no doubt ulterior personal motives were also a factor. We have many among us today who deplore the Pope in Rome, but who wish nothing so much as to be ‘pope’ in the ‘brotherhood,’ men who are totally possessed of a ‘big duck, small puddle’ complex. They demand that their opinions at every point must be the index of orthodoxy, and they love to ‘disfellowship’ and to ‘disqualify’ most of society as candidates for salvation. They have sought diligently to prevent you and Carl Ketcherside from having a fair hearing. They do not want to understand you, and they do not want anyone else to understand you. They want total mind-control over the ‘brotherhood.’

I do think these ecclesiastical bully-boys are losing their influence, and I say, less power to them. I hope your new book will strike a blow for liberty and better understanding of how we arrived at the sad state we now are in, and help recover the irenic spirit of earlier days.—*(Name and address withheld)*

(The above is part of a confidential letter to me by a brother who is very well acquainted in Church of Christ circles. He has said so well what needs to be said that we pass it along to you. As for his expectation that my history book will lay bare certain facts about how we got into this mess, I am glad to report that *It does!* You had better get your copy by writing to us at once.—*Ed*.)

We enjoyed very much your June Issue. "On Being Kin to Jesus" was especially inspirational. Another subscriber and I shared the article with two Christian friends during our lunch hour at work. One is a Baptist and one is Church of God. The four of us get together at least once a week to share ideas and experiences.—*Phil Elam, Red Bank. Tn.*

(Isn't it great for believers to get together and talk about Jesus! In these parts it is more likely to be the Cowboys. And this is the way to have your own unity movement. It is Jesus and his love that unites us. Nothing else will.—*Ed*.)

The Clifford church has 8 or 9 speakers now. We oppose the one-man preacher system. We have one brother 93 years old who is part of our teaching program. With the help of almighty God we have defied the critics and proven that God's system works. We have put into actual practice the system you and brother Ketcherside advocated in the 1950's. - *Mack Rife, Box* 183, *Richlands, Va.* 24641.

We participated in a Round Robin pulpit exchange involving six churches in Conway. I spoke at the First Methodist Church, and the minister of another Methodist church spoke for us. We regarded it as most wholesome.—*J. Harold Thomas, College Church of Christ, Conway, Ar.*

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SPECIAL SORT OF TRIP TO ISRAEL

We invite you to join us on a trip to Israel, Nov. 8-18, with David R. Reagan of Lamb and Lion Ministry, a frequent visitor to that country and an expert in the field, as co-sponsor. We visit Tel Aviv, Old Jaffa, the Valley of Sharon, Caesarea, Haifa, Akko, Nazareth, Cana, Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, the Golan Heights, Mt. Hermon, Caesarea Phillipi. This includes lunching at a Jewish kibbutz. That is only

the first three days. Six nights in Jerusalem at the famed King David Hotel provide even more educational pleasure: the Mount of Olives, old and new Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, Dead Sea Scroll Museum, Holocaust Museum, the Dead Sea, Bethlehem, Qumran, Masada, to mention a few. The Bible will be your guide. It will be a spiritual feast along with lots of fun with some of the most delightful Christians in the world. The cost is $1690 from New York. We will send you a detailed brochure upon request.

Our readers alone have now purchased 638 copies of *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by the editor of the journal, not counting those sold by the publisher. We are delighted with the enthusiastic response to this book, some assuring us that our history has at last come alive for them. But we have moderately bad news. The publisher has increased the price to 21.95, which is still a good price for a 739-page hardbound book, a handsome volume if we may say so. But if you send your check of 21.95 for the book, we will pay postage and handling, which puts the price near the original. We will put the book in the mail the same day we receive your order.

We have many new readers and we welcome each one. If the paper was sent to you as a gift (we have no unpaid readers), we hope you will give us a chance with a fair and honorable reading, remembering that our heritage is one of an open-minded people. If you are interested in what we have been saying in years past, we will send you 18 back issues of this journal, selected at random over the past decade, for only 3.00 postpaid.

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